



2018 ANNUAL ALUMNI CELEBRATION





If you want to be
successful, it's just
this simple.

Know what
you are doing.

Love what
you are doing.

And believe in what
you are doing.

- Will Rogers

2018 OKLAHOMA WORKS ALUMNI CELEBRATION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Presentation of Colors

Star Spencer High School JROTC Color Guard

Welcome

Karen Davidson, President
Oklahoma Workforce Association

Introductions

Eddie Foreman, Executive Director
Central Oklahoma Workforce Development Board

Opening Speaker

Melissa McLawhorn Houston, Oklahoma Labor Commissioner and
Secretary of Education and Workforce Development

Presentation of Awards

2018 Alumni of the Year

Nicholas Lalpui, Regional Administrator, Region IV, U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
Michael Widell, Deputy Secretary of Workforce Development
Erin Risley-Baird, Executive Director, Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development

2018 Business Leaders of the Year

Donnalla Miller, Princess Transports, My Own HR Coach and Chair, OAWDB
Nathaniel Harding, Founder and CEO, Antioch Energy, and
Chair, Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development

Presentation of Workforce Champion Awards

Donnalla Miller, Princess Transports, My Own HR Coach and OAWDB Chair
Nathaniel Harding, Founder and CEO, Antioch Energy and
Chair, Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development

Closing Speaker

Nicholas Lalpui, Regional Administrator, Region IV, U.S. Department of Labor/ETA, Dallas, TX

Reception—Fourth Floor Rotunda



PRESENTATION OF COLORS

STAR SPENCER HIGH SCHOOL JROTC

JROTC is a leadership and citizenship program with a mission to motivate young people to be better citizens.

At Star Spencer High School we have worked hard to become well known in the community as a premier Color Guard unit. Our Color Guard has presented the national and state colors for the Alumni Celebration for the last five years, as well as at OKC Thunder home games, OKC NAACP banquets, the MLK parade, FCA awards ceremony, Star Spencer home basketball and football games, graduation, and numerous other events throughout the greater metro. We really enjoy bearing our nation's colors and paying tribute to our nation. We also do community support projects such as painting the Bobcat Paw prints in front of the school and helping with the VA annual flu shot clinics.

The picture above is of the presentation of the Colors at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Award ceremony in 2013.



WELCOME

KAREN DAVIDSON, PRESIDENT OKLAHOMA WORKFORCE ASSOCIATION

Welcome to the 2018 Oklahoma Works Alumni Celebration!

Thank you honorees, family, friends and distinguished guests for making this day one where we truly demonstrate that integral to the success of the human spirit is both the determination of the individual and the ability of the public workforce system to provide both the path and the right opportunity.

The success of these honorees that we celebrate today is made possible by a workforce system, guided by business professionals, some of whom we are also honoring today, and by the dedicated staff that work directly with our customers on a daily basis. It is a system that provides the services that meet the needs of our customers. The volunteers that serve on local boards and workforce staff provide the knowledge, skills and resources for learning, earning and living.

Many of the honorees here today faced situations that seemed insurmountable and certainly they must have thought themselves without opportunity to overcome their personal barriers. The Oklahoma Works system was and will continue to be the place where many of our citizens can find the tools that will show them the steps they need to become productive and prosperous. Without the leadership of the business community helping us understand the skills and attributes that are needed by the workforce, however, we might be building steps that lead nowhere. It is this unique partnership between the public and private sectors that allow our workforce system in Oklahoma to be successful. With this partnership, the workforce system is able to provide customers the chance to learn, grow and obtain the workplace skills they need to be successful in providing a quality life for them and their families.

So once again, welcome to the 2018 Oklahoma Works Alumni Celebration of community partnerships working together to improve the lives of all Oklahomans.

Karen Davidson, President
Oklahoma Workforce Association



INTRODUCTION OF PRESENTERS

Eddie Foreman **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER** **CENTRAL OKLAHOMA** **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

Eddie Foreman is the first Chief Executive Officer of the Central Oklahoma Workforce Innovation Board, Inc. and has served in that capacity since February of 2005. He was responsible for establishing the Board's operations as a not-for-profit corporation.

From 2001 until 2005 he was the Executive Director of the Eastern Workforce Investment Board in Muskogee. Eddie retired from the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC) in 2001 with 30 years of service. At the time of his retirement he was the Division Director for Employment and Training where he was responsible for the statewide implementation of both the Welfare-to-Work program and the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. He also served as the Director of Job Corps for the agency from 1983 until 1997. During that time he won a National Award for Recruitment and Placement, the only state agency to earn that honor.

Eddie established the first statewide employer advisory council for OESC, designed to use the input of business representatives to improve the delivery of services by the agency.

Eddie graduated from Northeastern State University with a Bachelor's degree in Economics. He is a member of the Cherokee Nation, the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals, and Workforce Oklahoma Employment and Training Association, where he served as President for seven terms and was named Workforce Champion in 2009.

Additionally, he has been a member of Edmond All-Sports Board of Directors for 16 years serving as Chair for nine years, as well as a nine year member of Innovators, a national group of workforce board executives whose vision is to share, promote, and implement best practices.

Currently, Eddie is Secretary Treasurer of the Board of Directors for Oklahoma Employees Credit Union where he is past chairman and has been a board member for 16 years. He is also a member of the Oklahoma State Board of Credit Unions.



OPENING SPEAKER

Melissa McLawhorn Houston **OKLAHOMA LABOR COMMISSIONER AND** **SECRETARY OF EDUCATION AND** **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Melissa McLawhorn Houston serves the State of Oklahoma as Commissioner of Labor. She was appointed to office by Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin on November 20, 2015.

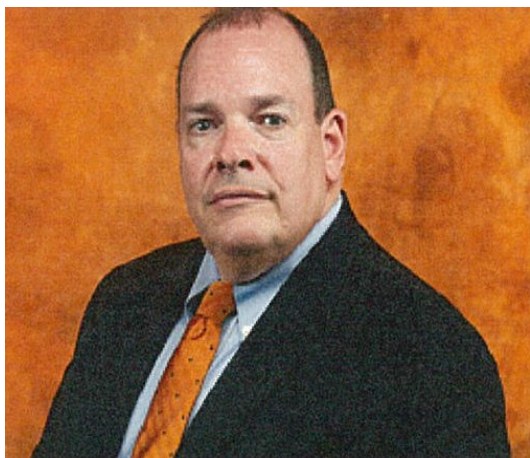
In addition, Houston was appointed by Governor Fallin on June 6, 2018 to serve as the Secretary of Education and Workforce Development.

Houston is an experienced administrator with extensive knowledge of state government. Her career accomplishments include: Chief of Staff for the Attorney General (2012-2015), Chief of Staff for the Oklahoma Office of Homeland Security (2002-2011), Deputy Director for the Oklahoma Sheriffs Association, and an Attorney for the Oklahoma Truth in Sentencing Policy Advisory Commission. As a survivor of the Oklahoma City Murrah bombing, she is a frequent speaker on the impact of terrorism.

Houston has extensive experience in state agency operational management, legislative process and budgeting. She has overseen and directed administrative operations of \$30 million in the attorney general's office and she oversaw and managed more than \$170 million in federal programming and funds while Chief of Staff at the Office of Homeland Security.

Houston attended the University of Oklahoma where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Letters in 1991 and a Juris Doctorate in 1994. She is a graduate of Leadership Oklahoma, Leadership Norman, and served as commissioner on the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women.

She and her husband, Ben Houston, who also is an attorney, live in Norman with their two young sons.



2018 PRESENTER

ALUMNI AWARDS

Michael Widell

Deputy Secretary of
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Michael Widell has more than 23 years of government and education executive experience. Currently, Michael serves in dual roles as Vice President of Operations and Long Range Planning for Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City and Deputy Secretary for Workforce Development.

Prior to Oklahoma State service, Michael held leadership positions within two Fortune 5 corporations. Michael holds an MBA from the University of Central Oklahoma and resides in Edmond with his wife and daughter.



2018 PRESENTER

ALUMNI AWARDS

Erin Risley-Baird

Executive DIRECTOR

**OKLAHOMA OFFICE OF
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Dr. Erin Risley-Baird is the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development, the administrative entity of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for the state of Oklahoma. In addition to her role as the state administrator of WIOA, she is also Executive Director of the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development, the Governor-appointed, business-led coalition of state, regional, and local agencies and organizations working to the efforts of economic and workforce development, education and training to create a world-class talent development system that meets the needs of students, job-seekers, workers, and businesses. Dr. Risley-Baird was formerly the Coordinator for *Oklahoma Works*, Governor Mary Fallin's Oklahoma initiative to align education and training with the modern workforce needs of the state.

Erin is a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin, with a Bachelor's Degree in Corporate Communication. She has a Master's degree in Political Communication from West Texas A&M University and has a Ph.D. in Communication and Public Policy from the University of Oklahoma.

Her research interests are primarily in political communication and health communication, with a focus on public policy communication, public event meaning creation, and resistance to official communication.

Her scholarly work is published in communication and social science journals, including the International Journal of Communication, Social Science Quarterly, and Western Journal of Communication. Her human-interest journalism work is found in *The Oklahoman*.



2018 PRESENTER

BUSINESS LEADER AWARDS

Donnalla Miller

Human Resources Professional
CHAIR, OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

Donnalla Miller, a human resources professional with over 17 years' experience, is the owner of Princess Transport, a trucking company providing transportation of aggregate material to manufacturers; and My Own HR Coach, a consulting company providing human resource, training and professional development services. Her passion for business development and training is evident by her willingness to volunteer time, talent and resources to many state and local workforce committees and boards.

As a member of the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development, Donnalla has served as Chair of the Oklahoma Works taskforce, paving the way for a more effective and efficient workforce system in the State of Oklahoma. Donnalla also serves as Chair of the Southern Workforce Board and Chair of the Oklahoma Association of Workforce Development Boards.

Donnalla received her Bachelor of Science in HR Management from Southern Nazarene University and also earned her Master of Science in Training and Development from Texas A&M.

Helping others achieve personal and professional excellence has been Donnalla's life-long journey. She will continue to serve her state and local community with pride and dedication.



Closing Speaker
Nicholas E. Lalpui
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR, REGION IV
**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR/
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING
ADMINISTRATION**

Nicholas E. Lalpui is the Regional Administrator in the Dallas Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Regional Office. The Dallas (ETA) Regional Office covers 11 states: Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah and Wyoming. Since joining ETA in 1997, he has served on a number of national task forces, including the Workforce Investment Act Regulations and Implementation teams, Employment Service Performance Measures team, the National Business Learning Partnership team and the Innovate ETA team.

Mr. Lalpui joined ETA from Roadway Package System (which is now FED EX ground) where he was an Operations Manager at the Fort Worth, Texas hub. Prior to his employment at RPS, Mr. Lalpui served four years in the U.S. Army as an M-1 Abrams Main Battle Tank Crewman, serving in Operations Desert Shield and Storm.

Mr. Lalpui has a B.A. from the University of North Texas in Political Science.



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

CENTRAL

BAILEY FITCHETT* AND PENNY PELKEY

EASTERN

CURTIS BRYANT AND SIERRA BETANCOURT*

NORTHEAST

EDAN COLE* AND REBECCA BRADLEY

SOUTH CENTRAL

RAYME GARDNER-EDWARDS AND RONNIE MCAFEE*

SOUTHERN

SONNY ADAMS AND TIFFANY VINEYARD*

TULSA

BRIANNA DAUGHERTY* AND SHEENA CUENCA

WESTERN

LEON WASHINGTON AND CRYSTAL AGUIRRE*

*** INDICATES SPEAKER**



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

**Central Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area**

Bailey Fitchett

Bailey Fitchett joined the WIOA Program April 27, 2018. When she enrolled, she had already completed Barber school however she lacked the experience and clientele that she needed to successfully open a business in Holdenville.

By utilizing the Work Experience Program, she was able to successfully complete 240 hours of work experience and begin to develop clientele in the Holdenville Area. She was able to work closely with the owner/operator of Salon on Main in a mentorship relationship to gain some knowledge of the ins and outs of running a business in a small town environment. During this time, she was able to highlight her skills such as straight razor shaving for men; (something that was not previously available in the Holdenville Area) as well as brand herself as the only “Barber” in the area. She saved her earnings from the work experience to aid her in opening her own shop.

Bailey has opened “The Lady Barber” in Holdenville and has been recognized by the Holdenville Chamber of Commerce as a new business owner. Members of the Chamber will attend her Ribbon Cutting on August 6, 2018 to welcome her into the business community. She is a great example of the unconventional ways that the WIOA Program allows participants to move forward.



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Central Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Penny Pelkey

My name is Penny Pelkey. I was born and raised in Norman, Oklahoma to a very good family. I have been blessed with opportunities and due to a very serious heroin addiction for 25 years, I let the opportunities pass me by. I had a very hard life; I was a menace to society, in and out of jail and prison for years. I visited jails, institutions, and even death a few times. In 2014 I was arrested for the final time. I was tired, I wanted out and I had no idea what that looked like but I was about to find out. God had his hand on me and by the blessings of the courts of Cleveland County, I was sent to RTP, Regimented Treatment Program, which is an intensive drug rehab with a military setting. This program saved my life and I was released February 25, 2015. I went into a sober living home where I thrived and soon began taking on more responsibility. I was burdened with a horrible record and trying to find employment was difficult, but the jobs I was hired for weren't dream jobs. I used what I learned in RTP to get promoted at my job at IHOP, I worked so very hard and very long hours. I stayed with IHOP for 3 years after my release. In May of 2017 I wanted a change, applied at Cheddar's in Norman, and got the job and I turned in my notice and left IHOP. I wanted to make more money and I had worked very hard to get to where I was at. Working at restaurants like Cheddar's you have to have a liquor license. During the interview I let the GM know I was a felon and probably wouldn't be able to get a liquor license. She assured me that if not we would figure something else out. I was refused a license and I was terminated at Cheddar's. I was granted unemployment and I was in a situation that I've never expected to be in. I took advantage of this time, and the unemployment allowed me to have time to better myself and learn a new trade. I had dreams of driving a big rig since I was a little girl and I thought it was time to ask about schooling. I had no idea that I would be able to take advantage of a grant that would pave my way to my new career. Getting my CDL was the hardest thing I have ever done. Driving a truck is the hardest job I have ever had. Both of these things are a blessing to me. I have achieved things I never knew I was capable of. Oklahoma Works completely changed and reshaped my life and has given me hope, and a very bright future. If I hadn't gotten to take advantage of the WIOA program, I honestly don't know where my life would be today. I get up every morning, in my truck, and sit behind that wheel and deliver America the goods they need for everyday life. From being a menace to being a contributing member of society, I have Oklahoma Works to thank for giving me the opportunity to take advantage of the grants that gave me a new life. I will forever be grateful and forever changed, thank you Oklahoma Workforce, thank you Terri Jacobs, thank you for being the reason for my success!!!



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Eastern Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

CURTIS BRYANT

My story starts at the age of 17 when I quit school to go to work in the oil fields with my dad. I worked in the oil fields until I was 20 years old. The same year that I lost my job as an oil field worker, my dad died. Two months after he passed, my mother died, and then my brother died two months after mom. It was just me and my sister doing the best we could. I soon found a job as a custodian, and met my wife and our two children. Soon after getting married, I lost my job as a custodian. I did find employment quickly at George Nigh in Okmulgee. Thankfully, they did not seem concerned about me not having a diploma. I worked for them over 23 years starting as a custodian, then receiving clerk, and finally a materials manager. I rode my bike to work to save money on gas and car expenses. In July, 2016, I lost my 30-year-old daughter. Her death was something indescribable. The pain of losing a child is a pain that a parent will never get over. Later that year, I thought, "Man, I have a wonderful job and can retire soon." BAM! September 26, 2016, I was laid off from my job of 23 years with no reason. It was a large layoff, the company I had been working for was bought out by another. With no job and unable to find another, I decided that I needed to get my GED now more than ever. I tried to take night classes with the Creek Nation, but found I didn't retain information from the teacher. My wife asked me to try the classes at OSUIT. I met with Mrs. Colombine and began taking classes there. She referred me the WIOA program adult career manager. I enrolled in their program and received assistance in paying for my GED. It took me a very long time to pass all four GED tests. During that time, WIOA Career Manager and Mrs. Colombine helped me obtain employment with OSUIT as a custodian. I worked the 3:30 to midnight shift Monday through Friday and attended GED classes from 8 AM to 12:00 noon. I rode my bike round trip seven miles every day to campus in all types of weather conditions. There were times I had to walk, but I didn't miss class and I didn't miss work. Every day I brought an extra outfit to change into, I didn't want to offend anyone. I packed and carried my lunch too, I was on campus from 8:00 AM until midnight. I studied hard and even came to see Mrs. Colombine on my lunch breaks for extra tutoring with math. After passing all my tests, except math, I knew I had to really push myself if I was going to reach my goal of "walking" in the GED graduation in July. Then on July 9, 2018, exactly two years to the day of my daughter's death, I finally passed my math test. I earned my GED diploma! After graduation I applied to the City of Okmulgee and was hired on 8/20/2018. I was more than thrilled. I would be making \$3 more per hour with a better schedule and great benefits. I write all of this because I want everyone to know that without the GED and WIOA programs at OSUIT, none of this would have been possible. It was hard, but with their help, I achieved my goal of getting a diploma and finding a good job. I also would not have achieved my goal without my wife's encouragement, support, love, and patience. My wife, Mrs. Colombine, and the WIOA staff kept telling me, "You can do it," and so I did. The people at the WIOA and GED programs really know their jobs and do them very well. Their programs help you with a hand up, not a hand out. These programs work. If you work at it, you will have all the help you need. I could not have done any of this without them. To the WIOA and GED program, I can only say, "Thank you and God bless you."



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR Eastern Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

SIERRA BETANCOURT

Osiyo Nigada! Tohitsu? Hello, everyone! How are you? This, along with many other words, are just a few of the things I've learned over the course of being an employee of the Cherokee Heritage Center. Every day the opportunity to preserve, promote, and teach Cherokee history and culture presents itself. As I look back, I would not have had the opportunity if it weren't for Oklahoma Works Work Experience Program.

Upon entering the Oklahoma Works office, I was an unemployed college dropout living in an income based apartment with a 13-month old son. I was tired of trying to find ways to make ends meet. Wanting to be better for my son and to teach him that life doesn't have to be so hard, I decided a change needed to happen. When meeting DeAnne Sedwick, I had every intention of turning my situation around, but no idea how to start. She began with the basics and helped me create a résumé, gave me vouchers for work clothes, and even donated some of her own clothes to help me get on my feet. She made me feel as if I actually had a fighting chance to get out of my situation and then aided me in doing so. After my interview at the Cherokee Heritage Center, I was so anxious to hear whether they wanted to place me there, that DeAnne's phone rang incessantly. To both of our pleasure, I'm sure; they said they wanted to place me on a trial basis as clerical assistant. Due to my call center experience, I was able to successfully answer incoming calls in a timely manner and assist callers by providing them with information to help them in their quest for their Cherokee family research. I became experienced in Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, and recording data based on visitor information. A mission of my own manifested to gain as much knowledge about the history and culture of the Cherokee people and to teach my son his heritage. With the possibility of not getting hired onto the Cherokee Heritage Center at the forefront of my mind, the idea of helping preserve history even in the slightest of ways took hold of me. I immersed myself in the culture and available resources in order to learn the most that I could in the three months of my stay.

A month after working at the Cherokee Heritage Center, the Group Tours Coordinator position was available and I was asked to fill the spot temporarily. Honored, I accepted. The position entailed organizational skills, customer service, up sales, public speaking, record keeping, money handling, and an array of many other skills that I have had to develop. After my work program ended, I was hired on as full-time Group Tours Coordinator. Each day, I had to commute from Wagoner to Tahlequah and because of Oklahoma Works, I finally had the resources to move closer to my job. After accepting the position, I felt that it was my duty to do everything in my power to make group tours better. I have been able to utilize all my skills to better the department a little bit at a time. As Group Tours Coordinator I have filmed events on property and turned their videos into promotional pieces to draw in more people. Some of the events I have created are Fall Harvest, A Cherokee Christmas, and a Scout Festival. I have also created experience packages designed specifically to attract groups to bring in people during our off season. In doing so I have been able to use all of my previous training to efficiently run the group tours department.

I take my work home with me a lot, but not in the typical sense. Work goes home with me when I speak to my son in Cherokee, when I bring my son home fry bread and dumplings, or at night when I read him Cherokee stories about how the world was created. It's when I come home happier. When Oklahoma Works first started helping me I was a shy, soft spoken, introverted, self-conscious individual. Now I stand a confident, positive woman who knows what her future holds. I am eternally grateful for this program; it has helped me become a mom my son can be proud of.



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Northeast Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

EDAN COLE

I am 21 years old, a single parent of a five-month old beautiful baby girl, and am currently living with my parents. I graduated from Sand Springs High School in 2015. While in school, I participated in the welding program. I worked for OSR for about nine months and became pregnant. I had to quit my job because of the pregnancy.

After my daughter was born, I started looking for work and worked a temporary job. While working the temporary job, I heard about an apprenticeship program in welding at Pelco Structural. I applied for the position but was denied because the program was full. A week later I was called and told that a position had become available in the program if I wanted to apply. I applied and entered the program in June.

The month of June I attended classroom training as the first step in the apprenticeship program. The next step was an on-the-job training. I went to Oklahoma Works and applied for the program with Career Manager Lourdes Conklin. I am now working through the apprenticeship program at Pelco Structural.

What helped me the most was the daycare assistance (Department of Human Services). It was tough to find a daycare that was open between the hours that I work (6 a.m. to 6 p.m.) Most daycares don't open until 6 a.m. and I was scheduled to be at work at 6 a.m. Pelco Structural has been very understanding with the daycare situation and has assisted with allowing me to be at work shortly after 6 a.m.

The assistance from various programs allowed me to not stress as much. I did not have to stress about money. I was given TANF for gas money, free childcare and food stamps (SNAP benefits). The money that I currently receive can be used on my daughter's needs.



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Northeast Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Rebecka Bradley

Ms. Bradley applied for Vocational Rehabilitation services at the Bartlesville Workforce Center in 2013. She had been working at a local grocery store with Community Integrated Employment supports from DHS's Developmental Disability Services. When new management came in, Becky was terminated and she was referred to DRS for assistance with Supported Employment and learning to drive.

An Individual Plan for Employment was developed to address barriers through appropriate services, so she could reach her vocational goal. Becky participated in four situational assessments, a driver's assessment and a psychological assessment. Job Club, Job Coaching, Job Development, Vocational Guidance, and behavior therapies resulted in Becky getting hired in a great job match. Linda Hensen from Futures For Tomorrow was her job coach. Though it took a while to find a good fit for Becky, these opportunities and successes allowed her to grow in confidence, social interactions and self-esteem, while expanding her view of the work world. She was hired February 23, 2017 at Walgreen's and earns an above average wage for her work as a stocker.

Becky rides horses Nike, Lacy or Blue at All Star Therapy each week, which has also been a great experience and contributed to her successes. She is active at St. James Catholic Church, where she also volunteers as a teacher's helper. Ms. Bradley and her family received DRS Benefits Planning assistance as well, so they were fully informed of work incentives and the financial impact of employment on her disability related benefits. VR services were later provided in conjunction with Developmental Disability Services Individual Plan for continued support after DRS successful case closure. Becky and her family know they can come to the Bartlesville Workforce Center to get any employment services she may need in the future.

Becky is happy to be able to buy things herself with her paycheck. She is glad to get out of the house, and contribute to the community. Everyone that knows Becky agrees when her Mom said she is much more confident since she was hired at Walgreen's. Becky said she's not ready to try to practice driving yet, but is happy to be working. When asked what Becky likes best about her job, Becky told her VR Counselor (Melissa Newton) "It's so nice I have friends now....and I like the money!"



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

**South Central Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area**

Rayme Gardner-Edwards

I was 50 years old, unemployed, and lacked any kind of training that would help me to be self-sufficient. I asked some friends and they pointed me to the workforce center where I was able to meet with a ResCare employee who told me about the WIOA program and how they could help me.

I was able to take Heavy Equipment Operations I & II training at the Heavy Equipment College of Oklahoma in Oklahoma City and am now employed as a forklift driver. I now have a steady job and I look forward to expanding my work experience in heavy equipment so I can get an even better job.

Ms. Chere' Kearney was very encouraging and helpful. She helped me get into school and also helped me with gas in order to get there.

I am so thankful for the program and the people that helped me to finish training.



2018
OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR
South Central Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area

Ronnie McAfee

Upon applying I was 47 years old, single with two grown children. I was unemployed and on parole. I was borrowing a truck to get around and living in a friend's house. I was referred to the Oklahoma Works Center by Donna Burns. Without the program, I wouldn't have been able to attend CDL school. The compassion of the staff made it easier to get through.

When I began the program, I didn't have anything to my name. I was completely busted and broken, I now have my own house, truck, and I have a job.

When I walked into ResCare, I was uncertain of what my future held for me. I asked about a truck driver school and was referred to Miss Jessica Forbes. When I approached her office, I was greeted with the kindest, warmest, smile and greeting. Miss Forbes listened as I told her about my situation. When I explained to her that I wanted to try truck driving she immediately went into action and explained all of my options. By the time I left her office, I knew exactly what I was going to do and where my life was heading. I entered CDL University with the expectation I was on my own but Miss Forbes took the time to make sure I knew that she cared about my success. She is extremely supportive and genuinely cares about each person that she comes into contact with. I have recently graduated from CDL University and am working full time. I'm very grateful that Miss Forbes and ResCare took the time to help get my life back on track. God sends Angel's. God sends Angel's to those in need and I thank him for having my Angel greet me with a kind welcoming smile.



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Southern Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Sonny Adams

I was 53 years old, broke and needing a job. I have a 16-year-old son and I take care of my mother. I was unemployed and on food stamps when I decided to see if the Oklahoma Works of Durant could help me to get a job so that I could better support my family.

I came to the Durant Oklahoma Works Center in Durant looking for a job. The people there helped me to prepare a resume and search for jobs. I told them that I would really like to obtain my CDL and become a professional truck driver. It was then that I learned about the WIOA Title 1 program through which I could get the help I needed to pay for the training program at Arbuckle Truck Driving School in Ardmore, OK.

The Oklahoma Works staff believed in me and they gave me a chance to develop my interests and abilities. They provided me the way to pay for truck driver training and advance my career opportunities. Without their help, I would probably still be without a secure job and still be on food stamps.

My family and I can now enjoy a higher standard of living. I can help pay for my son's education and I thank the people at Oklahoma Works for giving me a chance to accomplish my dreams. The Oklahoma Works System made it all possible. The helpful staff provided guidance and encouragement in reaching higher toward my full potential. Because of them I know I now have a new start in life.

I am thankful every day! Thank you! All of you!



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

Southern Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Tiffany Vineyard

I was 18 years old and the single mother of 2 children. I had just taken my GED and was not working. We were living on our own and running out of money. I wasn't sure where I wanted to work or what career path I wanted to follow. At the time, I had an old 1995 Yukon that wasn't the best. We managed to do what we could with what we had.

I had come across an ad on Facebook that talked about summer jobs with the workforce program. In 2012 I was able to do a Work Experience through WIOA and was placed at the Oklahoma Blood Institute. By being placed at the OBI, I finally decided I wanted to go into the medical field. I talked to my case worker and she gave me options and I found that I wanted to be an LPN. She then helped me get into the LPN school and helped pay for my tuition that I wouldn't have been able to do without the help. In addition to tuition, I received career counseling, supportive services, SNAP, and job placement and resume assistance.

I think what helped me the most was the guidance to the career that I now love and want to further my education in. Also, as the mother of 2 children the paid tuition helped me immensely. Many times, the extra money paid my bills, purchase the food we needed or even buy gas to help get me back and forth. I truly wouldn't be where I am today without their help!

I have just finished LPN school and am now waiting to take my NCLEX! Throughout the entire time I have received services, it has supported my family and I. I am now married with 3 children, living on my own and driving a 2008 Chevy truck. I no longer have to worry about my vehicle failing or how I am going to provide for my children. I have a set career path that I will be following.

The WIOA program is an excellent resource for people who are having trouble getting on their feet or just needing guidance to a career path. Without the program, there is no way I would be where I am, due to the unknown and cost of living and school expenses. This program allowed me freedom to pursue what is now a dream without the burden of expenses that go along with it. I will never be able to express the gratitude I have for this program and wonderful staff.



2018
OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR
Tulsa
Workforce Development Area
BRIANNA DAUGHERTY

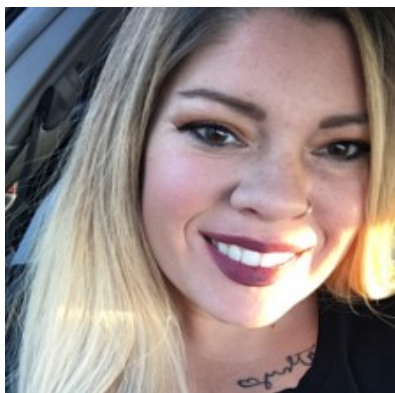
As a high school dropout who had no work history came into Workforce Tulsa to start her path on the road to success in the Healthcare field. Brianna was referred by a friend who found out about the Workforce Tulsa Youth Program's services by going through the program themselves. Brianna visited the Tulsa American Job Center to learn more about the services offered, which led to her meeting with Youth Career Navigator, Shelby Boaz. During the eligibility appointment, Shelby gave Brianna an overview of the Workforce Tulsa Youth Program, which caused Brianna to explore GED options and employment opportunities.

Brianna was deemed eligible for the Youth Program due to her educational status at age 20. Upon enrolling, Brianna was determined to get into GED classes as soon as possible because she wanted to pursue a job that required a high school diploma at least. Brianna quickly got enrolled in GED classes through Union Adult Learning Center and started to attend class every Tuesday and Thursday from 12:30pm-3:00pm at Workforce Tulsa's Center downtown. Brianna took an OK Career Guide assessment to help Shelby better understand what her career interests and values were. Brianna's career interests and values reflected her choice in Healthcare. Her interests were that of health informatics and therapeutic services to name a few, and her values were supervision and challenge while in a workplace. Brianna is confident in receiving information and practicing it by giving services to patients or clients. To further prepare for employment after Brianna obtained her GED, she attended a Dynamic Futures work readiness workshop that is offered once a month addressing Labor Market information, top five strengths, and interview prepping. Brianna earned a certificate after completing Dynamic Futures.

Shelby was able to provide Brianna with a supportive service through the Youth Program by helping her pay for her GED HiSet exam. This allowed Brianna to earn an incentive for obtaining her GED.

Brianna has been both active and engaged in her communication with Shelby and recently completed a six-week work experience at the Community Food Bank of Eastern Oklahoma to obtain more soft skills in areas that were needing improvement. Brianna has been working at Ross Dress for Less part time and just landed a new full-time position with U.S. Cellular as a Retail Wireless Consultant. Now Brianna is ecstatic she obtained her GED and a full-time job.

As far as Brianna's next steps, she hopes to get enrolled into school at Tulsa Community College. Brianna encourages every youth who chooses to drop out of high school to get involved with Workforce Tulsa to help gain soft skills, great interview techniques and coaching training and job placement.



2018
OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR
Tulsa
Workforce Development Area
Sheena Cuenca

Sheena Cuenca came to Workforce Tulsa to seek training and employment assistance. Sheena has had work experience in being a hairstylist and through management, but unfortunately neither experiences would have had long-term success in either field. But when Sheena was laid off due to business closure, she knew it was time to pursue her ultimate goal of being a Registered Nurse. Through Sheena's assessment results, she desired financial stability and independence, and most of all, she wanted to provide the best quality of life possible for herself and family. Sheena and Career Navigator, Antonio, had devised a plan for Sheena to reach her employment goal of being a Registered Nurse. First, Sheena she would go to Certified Nurse Aide training, work as an Aide to gain experience, then apply for school to obtain her Licensed Practitioner Nursing degree to eventually get into the Registered Nursing program. Sheena recently completed Certified Nurse Aide training, which was fully funded by Workforce Tulsa and she received her certificate and license.

Workforce Tulsa will be assisting Sheena in finding employment in her field and will provide additional funding when she begins school. Ms. Cuenca wishes to express her gratitude to Workforce Tulsa and stated how grateful she is for Workforce Tulsa, because she would not have been able to start this journey. Sheena also stated that Workforce Tulsa has given her a chance to build her future. Workforce Tulsa wishes to express their confidence in Sheena and that she will go far to exceed expectations in everything she does...the sky is the limit for Sheena! Congratulations Sheena on your successes!



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

**Western Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area**

Leon T. Washington

Leon came to the Clinton American Job Center on January 23, 2018 looking to increase his earning potential. He had always wanted to be a long-distance truck driver but was not sure he would be able to accomplish this goal, as there had been a bit of legal difficulties in his past. However, when speaking with his WIOA career manager he learned that the issue he was concerned with was now resolved and he had completed everything that was required to be allowed to enter his desired field.

Leon became concerned when the oil field company that he worked for started to lay off their workers due to lack of work, so he came into the Clinton Oklahoma American Job Center to check for anything that might help him out.

He attended Truck Driver Training at Caddo Kiowa Technology Center at the Western Technology Center in Burns Flat, OK.

Leon said the most important service he received or helped him the most was getting the CDL training paid for, as well as his fuel for training and a stipend to help until he had a driving job. He is now employed as a truck driver making \$23 an hour and making enough money to support himself and his children.

He said, "I was supported by the Clinton American Job Center staff, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Oklahoma Rural Opportunities (ORO) as partners who allowed me to do the one thing that I had always wanted to do and I would recommend any of the Workforce Partners to anyone with a need without reservation."



2018 OUTSTANDING ALUMNI OF THE YEAR

**Western Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area**

Crystal Aguirre

I started at the Oklahoma Works office in Clinton on March 19, 2018; not knowing it was the start of my new life. I have overcome many obstacles, including almost losing my life. I was diagnosed with Lupus at the age of 19 after having our daughter. Companies were terrified about hiring me. This resulted in living with my parents or my husband's parents throughout the years.

March of 2017, I moved to Clinton with my mother and not soon after ending up at the OUMC with stage 5 kidney failure. Not being able to work myself, my husband spent endless days searching to find a job. We lived under my mother's roof, received food stamps, and even Sooner care. If it wasn't for that; we would've moved back to Texas in a heart-beat. Our faith was down and we had given up.

November 2017, I'm back at OU Medical center and I get a phone call from my husband, telling me the doctor suspects prostate cancer. Thankfully, we were on Sooner care and could get him help. Knowing he couldn't work, I put the pressure onto myself to find a job and quick. I soon get a call from Big 5 head start and I start to substitute right away. After a while, I started talking to my mom about my job and she started to ask around to see what she could find for me.

My mother is with ORO in the Clinton office and she told me about going to speak to Debbie about possible job placement for the WIOA youth program. I got approved and started working. I learned how to properly answer phones, greet clients, and also learn about the unemployment side of the office. But just like that all things must come to an end. After two months of working there, I had to stop the program and move back to Texas to try and see if we could find my husband a doctor or possibly get Medicaid after being removed from Sooner care. I didn't know how much time we would have with him.

On May 8, 2018, we moved back to Fort Worth Texas. I immediately start job searching. Ten job applications later, I get a phone call from Kindred Hospital FWSW regarding a receptionist position. The reference letters from Debbie Ailanjian and Brenda Williams helped me as well as the skills and experience from working at Oklahoma Works.

I started working here on June 18, 2018. I started out making \$13.50/ hour working anywhere between 20-30 hours a week to now being promoted to admissions coordinator making \$15.00/hour working 40 hours a week plus full benefits just 2 months later. I love my job and I wouldn't trade it for the world. My husband is doing a whole lot better and on medication and now I can truly say we are doing okay. All this wouldn't be happening today if I wouldn't have walked into my job placement 6 months ago.

2018

Business Leaders of the Year

CENTRAL

Todd and Amanda Feehan
Dad's Plumbing

EASTERN

Angela Whitney
Pleasant Valley Health Care Center

NORTHEAST

Heather Smoot
Adams PARC

SOUTH CENTRAL

Jennifer Ellis
Cosmetic Specialty Labs, Inc.

SOUTHERN

Natasha Anderson
WebstaurantStore

TULSA

Brenda Bunyard, HR Team Lead
Biz Jet International

WESTERN

Matthew Barnes
Ditch Witch



2018 BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

**Central Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area
Todd & Amanda Feehan
Dad's Plumbing**

Todd and Amanda Feehan, owners of Dad's Plumbing, has played an integral part in leading and shaping the way workforce development should be in Oklahoma. During their time as an employer partner; Dad's Plumbing has taken on six clients for work experiences and three for on the job training. Dad's knows the value of educating the workforce on not only the plumbing trade but all the trades. Dad's has been a great proponent of the WIOA programs. They have told friends and family members who work for or own a business so that they too can help prepare clients for today's jobs. Dad's Plumbing has attended youth council meetings in which they have expressed their gratitude for the work experience and OJT programs that the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act offer.

Dad's Plumbing has collaborated successfully with Dynamic Workforce Solutions to provide a safe, learning environment for the plumbing trade. Todd and Amanda have also provided mock interviews for our clients to ensure the client is successful when trying to obtain unsubsidized employment. Todd and Amanda have successfully partnered with Francis Tuttle Business Incubator to develop virtual training for incoming plumbers. Todd has also met with Metro Technology Center, Houston Community College, Oklahoma Christian University, University of Central Oklahoma, and Oklahoma City Community College to collaborate on virtual training. Dad's Plumbing is on the forefront of the plumbing trade education. This means that an individual that is interested in plumbing can actually learn the trade at their own home. This can be done with virtual headgear and training simulations, in which, the student can earn badges after completing and demonstrating their proficiency in each area. They were also the recipient of the Oral Roberts University 2018 Augmented and Virtual Reality Educational Impact Award.

Todd and Amanda are actively seeking ways to promote working in the trades. Their goals are to train more people and provide advice, as well as, leadership to new entrepreneurs. Dad's Plumbing would make a great selection for the outstanding and distinguished business champion award. They are the model other businesses should inspire to be like. Their willingness and openness to take individuals from diverse backgrounds and train them so that they have the skills to become self-sufficient attests to the integrity and forward thinking of Dad's Plumbing.



2018
BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR
Eastern Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area
Angela Whitney
Pleasant Valley Health Care Center

Pleasant Valley Health Care Center represents leadership in the community of the Eastern Area. They are quick to work with our WIOA participants and give them the employment experience necessary in fueling their medical field passions. Whether it be through job shadows or work experience positions, Pleasant Valley Health Care Center is amazing at taking the one-on-one time to present the medical skills necessary to succeed in the medical field and enhancing the Eastern Area with qualified work candidates.

Pleasant Valley Health Care Center is always willing to engage the education and learning skills of our WIOA participants who are interested in pursuing the medical field. They are exceptional at giving our participants the ability to decide whether the medical field is something they are passionate about through job shadowing, work experience, work-based learning and employment-related guidance.

The Pleasant Valley Health Care Center has demonstrated that they are on board and willing to invest in our WIOA participants journey to employment and self-sufficiency. They have also hired our participants after receiving their medical credential/license in the role of Long-Term Care Nurse Aid as well as other individuals we refer to them.



2018 BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Northeast Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Heather Smoot Adams PARC (Post Acute Recovery Center)

As the Director of Care Transitions and Community Liaison, Heather Smoot is a proud advocate for the aging population throughout the Bartlesville community and NE Oklahoma. She has been an active 3-year member on the Community Care Transition Team (CCTT), a non-profit healthcare advocacy organization sponsored by Jane Phillips Medical Center and is now the acting secretary on the CCTT executive board. Heather has led Adams PARC in its partnership with Gorman Properties, managing company for senior independent living and disabled housing, and the properties social services director to ensure its residents receive the necessary resources to age independently in place. Adams PARC sponsors annual food drives to support the Gorman Properties community pantries, conducts mini health fairs and monthly medical chats to discuss the needs and resources available throughout the community for their residents. Adams PARC has been a healthcare partner at the Bartlesville Senior Apartments "Active Aging Week" for the past 4 years, sponsoring activities and a kick-off dinner for residents to jumpstart the week's events. She has also promoted monthly medical chats, focused on healthcare services and health awareness topics to ensure a healthier and more educated community throughout NE Oklahoma. Adams PARC is also a proud sponsor with the American Red Cross, hosting quarterly blood drives to promote community giving for Oklahomans in need. On behalf of Adams PARC, Heather has partnered with the Oklahoma Works-Bartlesville Center to assist employment candidates seeking positions in the healthcare industry. Adams PARC has experienced great success working with Oklahoma Works to identify employees seeking advancement and greater employment opportunities to better their lives and the lives of their families. As a result of this partnership, Adams PARC has hired 3 Title I participants that have completed and obtained their nursing credentials. Adams PARC has also been an active participant in the annual Oklahoma Works job fairs serving residents of Bartlesville and surrounding communities.

On behalf of Adams PARC, Heather has served in various capacities within the interworkings of the NE Workforce Development region, including serving as an active member on the Northeast Workforce Development Board. She has been an active leader during the inaugural planning stages of the NE Healthcare Consortium, helping to identify key business partners and educational leaders to further promote the goals of the consortium serving NE Oklahoma. As a result of these collaborative efforts, new partnerships have formed and opportunities surfaced to further promote educational and industry goals between the Rogers State University nursing program and clinical opportunities available in the rehabilitation facility offered by Adams PARC and their team of nurses and therapists.

Heather has also been actively involved with a new task force established to identify the childcare concerns as it relates to employee retention and its effects on future recruitment of qualified candidates at the MAIP. She is an active participant and advocate of workforce development and is always working to improve employment opportunities through her working partnership with the local office.

Adams PARC was honored to participate in a new program initiated by Leslie Sexson of Bartlesville Public Schools, providing healthcare industry shadowing to senior high students. Adams PARC has committed to participate in the 2018-2019 school year by accepting 2 more students into the program under the supervision of licensed nurses and therapists.

Heather has taken advantage of every opportunity to improve her own knowledge base of the workforce development programs in order to allow her the skills to better advocate on behalf of the many opportunities within the workforce development arena.



2018 BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

**South Central Oklahoma
Workforce Development Area**

Jennifer Ellis

Cosmetic Specialty Labs, Inc.

Cosmetic Specialty Labs is an important member of the Lawton – Fort Sill community. It was founded in 1973 by Edna Hennessee. After years of owning the largest salon in the area, Edna decided to create better cosmetic products by teaching herself chemistry and mixing. She utilized knowledge from chemical companies, the library, and trial and error to develop her products. In 1973, she opened Cosmetic Specialty Labs.

Fast forward over 40 years and Cosmetic Specialty Labs still stands as a pillar in the community.

President Jennifer Ellis serves as the Incoming Chair for the Lawton Chamber of Commerce. She participates in activities to bring the business community together, such as Business Before Breakfast and Business After Hours, which highlights local businesses monthly.

Chief Financial Officer, Philip Ferrell, works diligently with the WIOA Work Experience program to provide participants with the necessary hard and soft skills needed in the workplace. He has personally assisted job seekers in connecting with the local workforce to seek training and other assistance. Philip also encourages the hiring of veterans and participates with the on-the-job training program.

Cosmetic Specialty Labs is a member of the State of Oklahoma Chamber, and participates as a United Way Pacesetter Company, promoting employee unity and encouraging community pride and service. Their company culture also employs, encourages, and assists individuals with significant barriers to employment.

The winner of the 2018 Community Spirit award from the Lawton Chamber of Commerce, Cosmetic Specialty Labs participates in and sponsors ongoing community development. They are active sponsors of the arts, sponsoring organizations such as the Lawton Philharmonic and the Lawton Community Theater. They were recently recognized locally as one of the top ten best places to work in Lawton, OK.



2018 BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Southern Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Natasha Anderson WebstaurantStore

WebstaurantStore is not only the largest online distributor of restaurant supplies and equipment but also a community leader that has made tremendous contributions to the workforce development system of Oklahoma. Faced with the challenge of filling close to 200 job openings in a short period of time, WebstaurantStore partnered with the workforce development system for the recruitment of job seekers. WebstaurantStore is an industry leader and national organization, but faced significant challenges recruiting local talent because the community did not recognize the company name or services provided. The traditional labor exchange of placing job orders and waiting on job seekers to apply simply would not work. Oklahoma Works had to look for an innovative way to educate the community on the tremendous opportunities WebstaurantStore provided for its employees. The Oklahoma Employment Security Commission sent targeted emails to the job seekers located in the seven county areas introducing the community to WebstaurantStore and the culture of the organization. The Oklahoma Works Durant Center also hosted four career fairs at the Durant Oklahoma Works America Job Center with a total participation of 450 candidates. WebstaurantStore was onsite to review resumes of qualified job seekers, provide immediate interviews, and extend conditional offers of hire. Oklahoma Works and WebstaurantStore also partnered with targeted messaging through the local office Facebook page with multiple engagements. The initial post was shared 131 times reaching an initial audience of 10,053. Throughout the weeks leading up to the event multiple posts were made including resumes and interviewing tips as well as event reminders.

WebstaurantStore has emerged as a community leader and its contributions speak for themselves. WebstaurantStore coordinated with its parent company, Clark Associates, to sponsor a \$100,000 matching grant to the local J127 Ministry from the Clark Associates Charitable Foundation. The grant will help J127 fund construction of a transition home and provide an opportunity for thirteen young ladies to get help in their transition out of the foster care system. Additionally, an award of \$10,000 has been granted to the Boys & Girls Club for Project Learn which uses the hours young people spend at the club to reinforce and enhance the knowledge and skills they learn at school. This comprehensive strategy is based on Dr. Reginald Clark's research showing that students do much better academically when they spend their non-school hours engaged in fun, positive, educational activities. Project Learn has been proven to boost the academic performance of Club members. WebstaurantStore also donates scratch and dent items to nonprofit organizations and assists in transporting food once a month from the Hands of Hope Ministry to the St. Catherine's Church Food Bank. Other company sponsored events include "Radio Showcase Classic". This event is a girl's fast-pitch softball tournament that benefits the Boys & Girls Club of Durant and the Boys & Girls Club of Denison. WebstaurantStore also supports the Durant Rotary, Cali's Ride which raises awareness for Suicide Prevention, as well as hosting local blood drives on site supported by all WebstaurantStore employees.

Team-oriented leadership and community involvement are cornerstones in the culture of the organization. Natasha Anderson serves as Webstaurants Human Resource Administrator and Benefits Specialist. Natasha has been instrumental in the success of the organization and without her leadership this award would not be possible.



2018
BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR
Tulsa
Workforce Development Area
Brenda Bunyard, HR Team Lead
Biz Jet International

Biz Jet partners with Workforce Tulsa to allow participants of our program exposure to an in-demand sector of Aerospace, which our participants may not have traditionally been exposed to. Biz Jet recognized that there is a need and shortage for qualified and certified Mobile Engine Services (MES) Technicians and therefore recognized that our participants have the skill level and competency to possibly fill their employment gap but, in some cases, may have a barrier to employment. An opportunity is a simple, yet powerful tool utilized to empower people to be productive, engaged citizens. Biz Jet was one of the first companies to take advantage of our subsidized employer options to connect with an underutilized, and skilled labor pool. Giving them an opportunity to prove themselves.

We are proud partners with Workforce Tulsa. We were able to take on six of Workforce Tulsa's participants since July 1st, 2018, thanks to the ability to use on the job training funds from Workforce Tulsa. Over 80% of the applicants are still working with us through the OJT program. Working with Workforce Tulsa also gives our OJT recipients additional support such as supportive services for any barriers that may hinder their progression towards a career. This speaks to our dedication to collaborate with Workforce Tulsa and be an opportunity for those interested in Aerospace. Our partnership has grown with Workforce Tulsa in the past several months, because together we are able to comprehensively serve our community.

Biz Jet is proud to have taken advantage of the multitude of resources available with Workforce Tulsa. Since the start of our partnership, we have been able to grow in our understanding of what Workforce Tulsa has to offer us and its participants.

Biz Jet has been able to start the process of creating a strong pipeline of employees and utilize all the resources that Workforce Tulsa has to offer. We look forward to continuing to work with Workforce Tulsa to continually expose and target the aerospace population to ensure them the same opportunities as the ones we are currently working with. Through the on-the-job training program, we have been able to help Biz Jet save over thirty-five thousand dollars in employee salaries. We look forward to the future and working with Biz Jet to create economic change for our participants.



2018 BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Western Oklahoma Workforce Development Area

Matthew Barnes

Ditch Witch

On July 19, 2018, at the Western Oklahoma Workforce Board Meeting, the board was presented with the Western On-the-Job Training with Ditch Witch. Amanda Willis, Tonja Jones, and Yolanda Creswell met with Matt Barnes from Ditch Witch in May. At that time, Ditch Witch had begun working with Meridian Technology Center to potentially provide a 9-week training program for three positions with their manufacturing operation. Ditch Witch has decided at this time they will only focus on the Production Welding position. Ditch Witch has requested assistance from WIOA for recruitment of participants, and partial payment of wages for the trainees during their training time. This program will start on August 6, 2018. The participants will be hired as welders, and will be eligible for benefits that other new hires are eligible to receive, and the trainees will be kept as regular full-time employees when they have successfully completed the training program. The Western Oklahoma Workforce Board approved the 50% of the trainee wages for the 9-week training session for a total of 15 participants!

Ditch Witch increased the number of Production Welders and was unable to hire trained welders to fill those positions. At that time, Ditch Witch partnered with both WIOA and Meridian Technology Center to create a training program to fill these positions. Through the Ditch Witch Training Academy, Ditch Witch is able to hire untrained employees and put them through a structured training program, resulting in highly trained manufacturing employees. All local partners were aware of the OJT project and referred clients to the local WIOA staff in the Enid, Stillwater, and Ponca City Workforce office. We have a total of 9 participants that are currently enrolled in the training. Ditch Witch partnered with the WIOA.

Ditch Witch is actively growing a Workforce of Tomorrow initiative. Through this program, Ditch Witch is working to grow a pipeline of applicants for tomorrow's workforce. Ditch Witch is involved and participates in several organizations to help grow our workforce to include multiple endeavors with Meridian Technology, FFA, Oklahoma Dream It Do It, ESGR and SkillsUSA at the local, state and national levels.

Through this training program, Ditch Witch was able to train new employees with little to no manufacturing experience and set the foundation for them to have a successful career in manufacturing. These applicants came from a variety of backgrounds including, high school graduate, tire and lube technician and even a certified nurse. Programs like this, allow people to gain a new set of work skills that will allow them to grow their career in our local community.



“SUCCESS IS NOT FINAL,
FAILURE IS NOT FATAL:
IT IS THE COURAGE TO CONTINUE
THAT COUNTS”

WINSTON CHURCHILL

1874—1965

2018 Workforce Champion

On behalf of the Oklahoma Association of Workforce
Development Boards (OAWDB) and the
Oklahoma Workforce Association (OWA),
the

2018 WORKFORCE CHAMPION Award
will be presented to a very deserving individual
in

appreciation and recognition of

**“OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND DEDICATION
TO**

OKLAHOMA’S WORKFORCE SYSTEM”



CREATING OKLAHOMA'S WORKFORCE ADVANTAGE

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL FOR WORKFORCE

AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The **Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development** brings together leaders from across a variety of private and public sector organizations to develop a strategy for accelerated economic growth which is for Oklahoma to have a competitive advantage through integrated workforce and economic development objectives. The Council will achieve this vision through its mission to advance a demand-driven and economic development system.

THE STRATEGY

Vision:

Oklahoma as a competitive advantage through integrated workforce and economic development objectives.

Mission:

Oklahoma advances a demand-driven workforce and economic development system.

Result:

Oklahoma achieves wealth-creation for business and individuals.

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

The **Oklahoma Association of Workforce Development Boards (OAWDB)** is a non-profit organization representing the seven Workforce Development Boards, over 30 American Job Centers and other workforce development partners in Oklahoma. Our members include business, local non-profits, government, educational institutions and community-based organizations involved in training, education, economic development and employment. Oklahoma's Workforce Development Boards are private sector-led boards focused on strategic solutions to workforce issues in their regions. OAWDB's mission is to promote, enhance and serve the interests of local workforce development partnerships in Oklahoma.

At the state and federal levels, OAWDB represents the voice of the local system to ensure that policy and administrative decisions are made with the full understanding of the implications of implementation. On the local level, we work to support and improve regional and community system building through the provision of a broad spectrum of policy comments and guidance, board-to-board technical assistance and access to a peer network of practitioners around the state.

Promoting the interests of the local workforce development delivery system is OAWDB's top priority. Advocacy is conducted with the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED), state and federal workforce development oversight agencies and those who administer various workforce development, economic development or job training initiatives. OAWDB provides information about workforce development policy as requested, by state and federal legislators and their staff, or remarks according to OAWDB's strategic position.

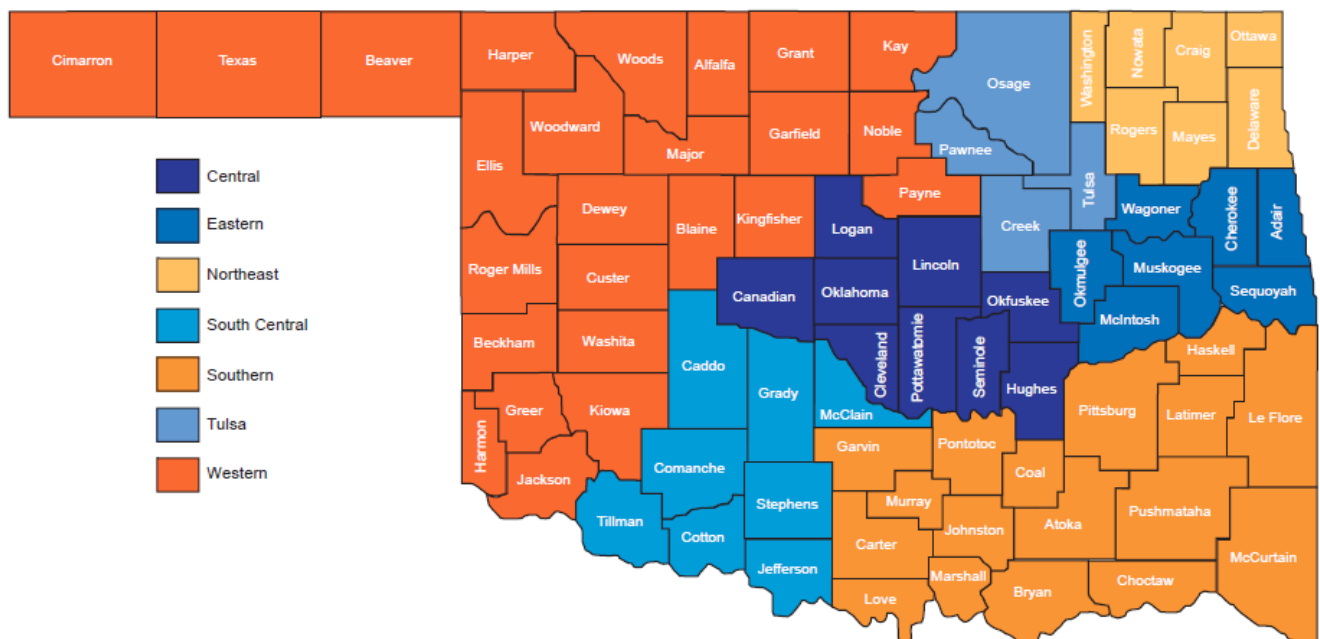
OAWDB acquires, interprets and distributes to the membership the most up-to-date information on workforce development, economic development, education, business trends, welfare reform and related initiatives. By keeping the system informed, members are prepared to play an important role in the local design of the various workforce development strategies.

OKLAHOMA'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

Today, employers and job seekers are plagued by a skills mismatch. Communities that can create an effective, on-going talent pipeline that ensures there are workers with the right skills to meet the ever changing needs of businesses can grow and remain competitive. For Oklahoma to have a truly world class workforce/talent development system, the Governor, along with State Agency Workforce Partners, realized that all involved must go beyond being a "collection of hard working, effective individual agencies" and become an "efficient, effective system providing seamless and comprehensive services". To create this system, the decision was introduced to use the established and proven network of Workforce Development Boards to look at the system holistically and be the convener.

The boards, being business driven, recognized that a systems approach for Oklahoma creates not only a more effective service delivery approach for Oklahoma citizens and business, but a true competitive advantage for Oklahoma's economic development efforts; thus meeting their strategic vision that "Oklahoma's workforce development system increases profitability for businesses and increase income for all Oklahomans".

Oklahoma Workforce Development Areas



OKLAHOMA WORKFORCE ASSOCIATION



The **Oklahoma Workforce Association (OWA)** is a non-profit organization representing the seven Workforce Development Areas in Oklahoma. Our members include WDB staff, fiscal agents, service providers, and front line staff who are engaged in the development and delivery of the state's workforce system. OWA's membership is currently expanding to include workforce professionals from Workforce System Partners, at the present time including the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC), the Department of Human Services (DHS), Higher Education, Adult Basic Education, Department of Career and Technology Education, and the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). OWA's Executive Committee and longtime members welcome new members from all system partners.

OWA promotes economic and social improvements in the state through the provisions of high quality employment and training services in close cooperation with appropriate federal, state and local authorities.

OWA also supports the collective interests of the Association's members in employment and training matters affecting the professional lives of employment and training personnel by acting as a focal point for receiving or obtaining employment and training information, deliberating issues arising from such information and for deciding upon appropriate courses of action according to the desires of the Association membership.

Functions of OWA are:

- To provide a forum through which to achieve a regular and effective exchange of ideas, information and experiences between the staffs of the designated Workforce Development Areas, Regional Workforce Development Boards, and our workforce partners.
- To encourage a spirit of cooperation and develop the practice of professionalism on the part of employment and training staff members through meetings, workshops, self-evaluation and such other organizational activities as may contribute to the improvement of Workforce Development Areas.
- To formalize viewpoints and comments on existing and proposed employment and training programs, plans and policies and when requested, or as decided by the Association membership, advise or recommend changes as are pertinent and meaningful, in terms of improved delivery of employment and training services, to appropriate authorities.
- To maintain cognizance of significant employment and training program developments including but not limited to, such categories as training programs; operating methods and techniques; new legislation; federal and state rules and regulations; program changes; opportunities for coordination linkage, and mutual support among employment and training agencies; program effectiveness; employment and training staff salary scales; trends in the employment and training needs of the state and local areas; and such other matters as may be determined by the Executive Committee—all for the purpose of determining appropriate action by the Association in the interest of improved delivery of employment and training services.

OWA is dedicated to Workforce Excellence in Oklahoma

2018 OKLAHOMA WORKS ALUMNI CELEBRATION COMMITTEE



COMMITTEE CHAIR

MICHELLE BISH, NORTHEAST WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Jeane Burruss | Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development |
| Linda Emrich | Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development |
| Gretchen Evans | Northeast Workforce Development Area |
| Stephanie Roe | Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services |
| Ashley Sellers | Central Oklahoma Workforce Development Area |
| Jeremy Zeller | Oklahoma Department of Commerce |



**WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING
WORKFORCE PARTNERS**

AMERICAN JOB CENTER NETWORK

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL FOR WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OKLAHOMA ASSOCIATION OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF CAREER AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION SERVICES

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION

OKLAHOMA HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY

OKLAHOMA OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OKLAHOMA STATE REGENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY—OKLAHOMA CITY

OKLAHOMA TRIBAL WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING ADVISORY COUNCIL

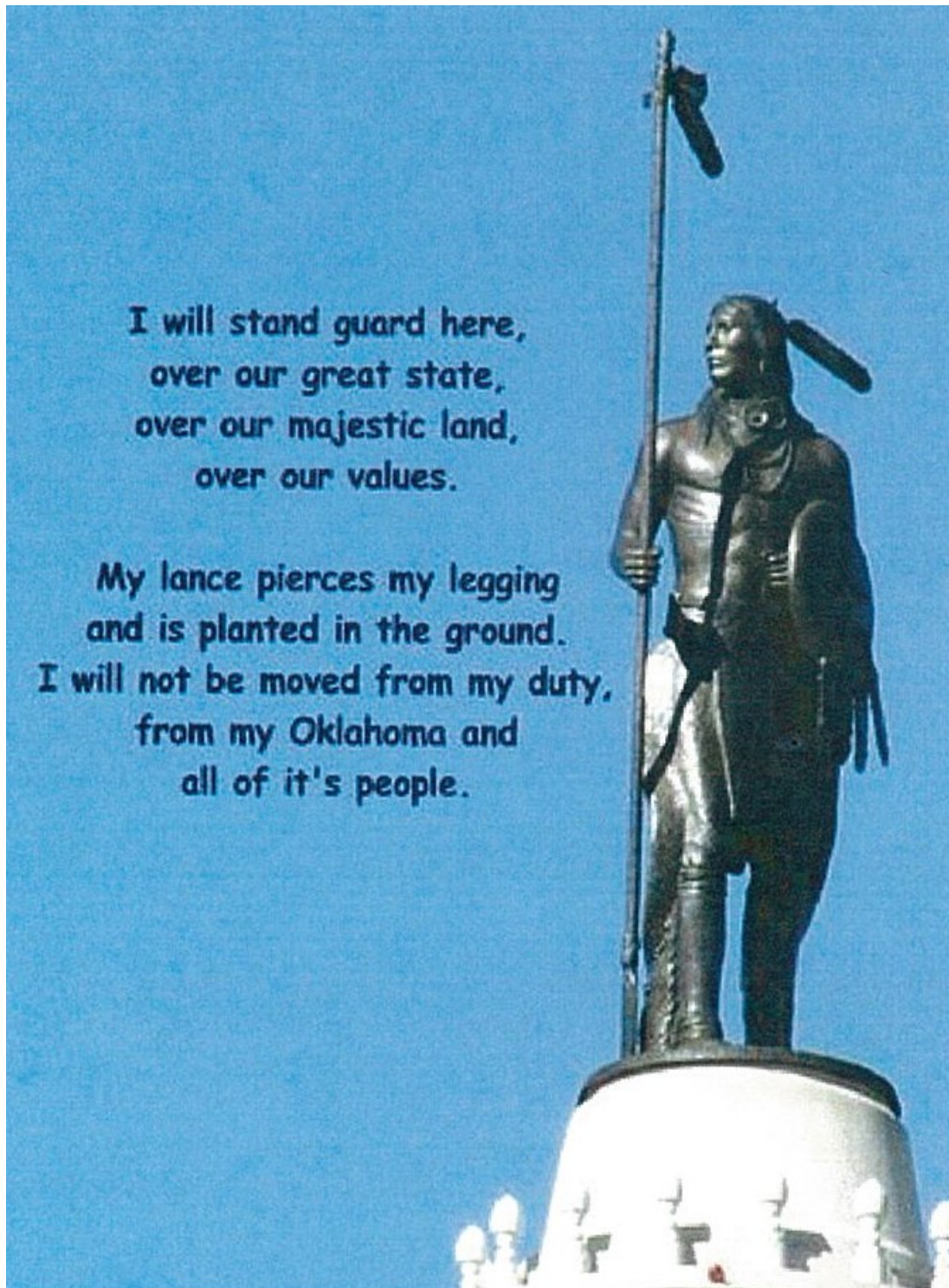
OKLAHOMA WORKFORCE ASSOCIATION

JOB CORPS

**SPECIAL THANKS TO THE
OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION PRINT SHOP STAFF**

**Thank you for attending the
2018 Oklahoma Works Alumni Celebration!**

**Your attendance today was greatly appreciated.
Please join us in the Fourth Floor Rotunda for a Reception
honoring the 2018 Alumni and Business Leaders of the Year.**



“THE GUARDIAN”

ON TOP OF THE STATE CAPITOL

**THE
STATE OF OKLAHOMA
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

I salute the flag of the State of Oklahoma.
Its symbols of peace unite all people.



**WIOA Programs are Equal Opportunity Employers/Programs
Auxiliary Aids and Services are Available upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities**

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